

Tillipalle District of Jaffna Ceylon May 20 1817

My dear Parents brothers & sisters.

This is the fourth letter I shall have sent to some of our family since I arrived in India, but I have been much disappointed in not having received a single line from home tho' I frequently hear of the arrivals of vessels from some of the eastern ports of the U. S. &c. I cannot avoid often enquiring why this delay on the part of my friends to gratify me with a few lines at least -

But then I think you may have written & the letter has failed to reach me yet the letters of other friends have reached us from time to time -

I have however heard from home - The painful stroke of a righteous Providence in removing my beloved sister E. has reached me. I have seen the account of her death published in the Prophet. Our my friends as the loss but this I doubt not is gain - infinite gain -

While we mourn her departure from us let us be wise & prepared to follow her into that world from whence no traveller returns. To other mansions of blessedness. when her happy soul is joining with the redeemed of the Lord. saying Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power & riches & wisdom & strength & honour & glory & blessing. A few days more we shall follow her into the eternal world - & that we may prepared to dwell with her forever. I was daily in expectation of a letter from her when the news came that she was no more - & And who of the remnant of our family may have gone before this, is unknown to me. Let us be always ready? Since I wrote you that is in Jan. my health has been usually good nothing of particular importance has occurred to us since I wrote - Mr & Mrs Poor & myself with their little daughter Mary Anne enjoy a very peaceful & happy shade at Tillipalle. Our neighbors are heathens there is not an European family within eight miles of us & only one friend out of our family & neither than that with whom we can converse in English. That is a. Magistrate of Dutch extraction tho' a native mother about two miles from us. He is a most valuable man eminently pious & much engaged for the temporal & spiritual good of this degraded people & in making all the progress in the language of the country we can. -

We only begin to stemmese a little with the people. I long to be able to proclaim to them myself in their own language the wonderful love of God for sinners in giving his dear son to die for them. At present we preach & talk to the people thro' an interpreter. He is a native but understands our language very well. Much of our attention is given to establish schools & instruct the children & youth. We often have to use much persuasion to induce the parents to let us have their sons to educate & often have to give them some support before they will send to us, especially the poorer class of people. We find many entirely opposed to sending their sons lest we should persuade them to forsake the religion of their forefathers & embran ours. But these are the persons with whom the Brahmin priests have much influence. I am happy to find that their influence is not very extensive & that many are now becoming anxious to have their children learn english. That is their sons, for not one will suffer a daughter to learn to read even her own language. We have made several efforts to get the girls to teach but in vain. They reply is - We have no customs, & if our daughters learn to read they will never get married, which among the Mahars the consider to be one of the greatest evils that can befall a family. The daughters are often betrothed to an intended husband at the four or five & are usually married before they are ten years old. That is in those families of good cast & possessing some property. The bargain is made by the parents & usually the daughter has a dower of land money jewels or something from her father at her marriage. We hope soon to overcome their foolish wicked notions of this people that are may teach the women as well as the men the important truths of the religion of Christ. Females generally will not come to our meeting & we cannot always see them when we go to their huts. The wretched degraded state of this people is enough to move the stoutest heart. No person, who believes in the divine revelation of the scriptures, can calmly witness their real condition & not acknowledge the importance spending the word of life by the hands of missionaries to save them from their assemblation to hounds to enjoy the blessings of civilized beings. If we enquire what is it that maketh us to differ from them we say it is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is owing to the rich mercy of God to us.